מוסר MUSSAR CENTER

Welcome to the Mussar Center's list of 48 MUSSAR MIDDOT! Middah (מִדָּה) is pronounced mee-DUH and the plural middot (מִדּוֹת) is pronounced mee-DOTE. The literal meaning of this Hebrew word is measures/capacities but it has come to also mean character qualities, soul traits, divine attributes, and even values. Much of Mussar practice is oriented around middot: working on specific character qualities (tikkun hamiddot תִּקּוּן הַמִּדּוֹת) and connecting with Hashem through his attributes.

Why is this list of Middot different from all other lists? It's the biggest and most detailed list available - giving three English words per middah to deliver the fullest sense, explaining verbal roots and literal meanings, and listing similar middot in (parentheses) and opposites in [brackets]. It's also the only list to incorporate the Sephirot, Big Five personality traits, and Jungian cognitive functions/MBTI.

Note that transliterations are standard but for the sake of beginner-friendliness pronunciations are written as most commonly spelled in English (for instance, KAL is written CALL). Note also that each middah and its opposite are neutral in their purest forms but this neutrality is often lost through translation and interpretation. For this reason we present this list as a work in progress and invite your input through the contact page at www.mussar.center.

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1. AWE Yira (year-AH) יִרְאָה

Awe, reverence, fear

(פְּלִיאָה Plia, PLEE-ah: Wonder, amazement)

(כּוֹבֶד רֹאשׁ Koved Rosh, KO-ved roshe: Seriousness, solemnity, gravitas)

[קַלּוּת רֹאשׁ Kalut Rosh, CALL-oot roshe: Disregard, levity, flippancy; literally "light-headedness"]

2. BALANCE Izun (ee-ZOON) אִזּוּן

Balance, poise, moderation

(דֶּרֶךְ הָאֶמְצָעִית Derech Ha'Emtzait, DARE-ech ha-em-tsah-EET: the middle path/way/course)

[קִצוֹנִיוּת Kitzoniut, keets-own-ee-OOT: Extremism, going to either end of a spectrum]

3. BEAUTY Tiferet (tee-FAIR-et) תִּפְאֶרֶת

Beauty, harmony, balance

Sixth Sefirah: Reconciliation, synthesis, integration; the Heart (between Chesed & Gevurah)

[כְּפִישָׁה Kefisha, k-fee-SHAH: Uneven, asymmetrical, divided]

[מְרִיבָה Meriva, mree-VAH: Conflict, rivalry, division]

4. BROTHERHOOD Achava (ach-ah-VAH) אַחֲוָה

Brotherhood, familiarity, belonging

(חֲבֵרוּת Chaverut, chav-air-OOT: Partnership, camaraderie)

(אַחְדוּת Achdut, ach-DOOT: Unity, solidarity, togetherness)

[זָרוּת Zarut, zarr-OOT: To be unfamiliar, foreign, an outsider]

5. CAREFULNESS Zehirut (zeer-OOT) זְהִירוּת

Carefulness, deliberation, caution; related to אַזְהָרָה warning

(עֵרָנוּת Eranut, air-ah-NOOT: Alert, watchful, vigilant; literally to "stay awake")

[פְּזִיזוּת Pezizut, p-zee-ZOOT: Spontaneous, impulsive, reckless]

6. CLARITY Tohar (TOE-har) טֹהַר

Clarity, lucidity, purity; also טָהֳרָה Tahara

(נְקִיוּת Nekiyut, nicky-OOT: Cleanliness)

(זְכוּת Zechut, zuh-CHOOT: merit, right, privelege; from זכה *clear, transparent, innocent)*

[תַּאֲוָה Ta'avah, tah-ah-VAH: Desire, craving, lust]

7. COMPASSION Rachamim (raw-chuh-MEEM) רַחֲמִים

Compassion, sympathy, empathy; related to רֶחֶם womb; cognitive function = personal feeling

[אַכְזָרִיוּת Achzariyut, ach-zarr-ee-OOT: Cold, cruel, ruthless]

8. CONSCIENCE Busha (boo-SHAH) בּוּשָׁה

Conscience, moral sensitivity, embarassment; literally "shame"

(חֲרָטָה Charata, char-ah-TAH: Regret, remorse, sorry)

[עַזּוּת Azut, ah-ZOOT: Fierce, unfeeling, brazen]

9. CONSIDERATION Adivut (ah-dee-VOOT) אֲדִיבוּת

Consideration, thoughtfulness, courtesy

(דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ Derech Eretz, DARE-ech AIR-ets: Politeness, manners, tact; literally "the way of the land")

[גַּסוּת Gasut, gah-SOOT: Rough, rude, coarse; also גַּס לֵב/גַּס דַּעַת/גַּס רוּחַ - literally a "large (i.e. bulky or clumsy) heart/mind/spirit"]

10. CONTENTMENT Histapkut (he-stop-KOOT) הִסתַּפְּקוּת

Contentment, simplicity, moderation; from ספק to divide/apportion

(נַחַת Nachat, NAH-chat: Satisfaction, gratification, comfort)

(קִמּוּץ Kimutz, KEY-moots: Minimalism, frugality, thrift; related קוֹמֶץ closed hand/fistful)

[קִנְאָה Kinah, key-NAH: Passion, envy, competition]

11. COURAGE Ometz Lev (OH-mets lev) אֹמֶץ לֵב

Courage, bravery; literally "strength/stubbornness of heart"

(חוּצפָּה Chutzpah, CHOOTS-pah: Boldness, audacity)

[רַךְ לֵבָב Rach Levav, rach lay-VOV: literally "softness/sensitivity of heart"]

12. DECISIVENESS Charitzut (char-ee-TSOOT) חֲרִיצוּת

Decisiveness, assertiveness, industriousness; literally "pointed/sharp"

(שְׁקִידָה Shkida, shkee-DAH: Focus, application, diligence)

[עַצלוּת Atzlut, ahts-LOOT: Inactive, hesitant, not present]

13. DEVOTION Chasidut (chah-see-DOOT) חֲסִידוּת

Devotion, loyalty, commitment

[אֲרָעִי Arai, ah-rah-EE: Casual, occasional, temporary]

14. FAITH Emuna (em-oo-NAH) אֱמוּנָה

Faith, belief, conviction

(בִּטָּחוֹן Bitachon, beet-ah-CHONE: Trust, confidence, assurance)

[סָפֵק Safek, suh-FAKE: doubt, uncertainty, ambivalence; literally "division"]

[חֲשְׁדוּת Chashdut, chash-DOOT; Suspicion, wariness, skepticism]

15. FAITHFULNESS Ne'emanut (neh-mahn-OOT) נֶאֱמָנוּת

Faithfulness, trustworthiness, reliability

(קֶבַע Keva, KEH-vuh: Consistency, regularity, permanence; literally "fixed time/place")

[הֲפַכְפַּךְ Hafachpach, ha-FACH-pach: Changeable, unstable, inconsistent; from הפך to to turn, reverse]

16. FLEXIBILITY Gemesh (GEM-esh) גֶּמֶשׁ

Flexibility, adaptability, resilience

(פְּתִיחוּת Ptichut, pity-CHOOT: Openness, receptivity)

(סַקְרָנוּת Sakranut, sock-ron-OOT: Curiousity, inquisitiveness; literally to "look around/explore")

[קַשְׁיוּת Kashyut, kosh-YOOT: Rigidity, stiffness; literally "hardness"]

17. FREEDOM Chofesh (CHOE-fesh) חוֹפֶשׁ

Freedom; literally "exemption"

(דְּרוֹר Dror, DRORE: Liberty; literally "swallow/sparrow")

[חוֹבָה Chovah, choe-VAH: Duty, conscientiousness, obligation; literally "debt"]

18. GENEROSITY Nedivut (nid-ee-VOOT) נְדִיבוּת

Generosity, liberality, voluntary action

(עַיִן יָפָה Ayin Yafa, EYE-een yuh-FUH: Generous and bountiful; abundance mindset; literally "beautiful/good eye" i.e. positive outlook)

[עַיִן־הָרַע Ayin Hara, EYE-een ha-RAH: Stingy and begrudging; poverty mindset; literally "bad eye" i.e. negative worldview]

19. GOODWILL Ratzon (ruts-OWN) רָצוֹן

Goodwill, friendliness, agreeableness

(קַבָּלָה Kabala, kah-ball-AH: Acceptance, welcome)

[הַכנָסַת אוֹרְחִים Hachnasat Orchim, hach-nah-SAHT ore-CHEEM: Hospitality; literally "bringing in travellers"]

[אֵיבָה Eivah, ey-VAH: Animosity, hostility, disagreeableness]

20. HOLINESS Kedusha (kid-oo-SHAH) קְדֻשָּׁה

Holiness, dedication, specialness

(רוּחָנִי Ruchani, roo-chan-EE: spiritual, transcendant; cognitive function = intuitive/abstract)

[גּוּפָנִי Gufani, goof-ah-NEE: physical, earthly; literally "bodily/fleshly"; cognitive function = sensory/concrete]

[חִלּוֹנִי Chiloni, chee-lo-NEE: Common, worldly, secular]

21. HONESTY Yosher (YO-share) יוֹשֶׁר

Honesty, sincerity; literally "straightforward/direct"

(תָּמִים Tamim, tah-MEEM: literally whole/wholehearted)

[חֲנוּפָה Chanufa, chah-noo-FAH: Pretense, hypocrisy, flattery]

22. HONOUR Kavod (kuh-VODE) כָּבוֹד

Honour, respect, dignity; literally "weight"

(יְקָר Yikar, yee-CAR: literally to regard as "valuable/precious")

[זִלְזוּל Zilzul, ZILL-zool: literally to treat as "cheap"]

[לַעַג La'ag, LAH-ahg: to make light/fun of, mock, ridicule]

23. HOPE Tikva (teek-VAH) תִּקְוָה

Hope, expectation, waiting; from קוה to gather/rally to/focus

[יֵאוּשׁ Yeush, yeh-OOSH: Resignation, carelessness, despair; from יאש to let go, give up]

24. HUMILITY Anava (ah-nuh-VUH) עֲנָוָה

Humility, gentleness, meekness; from ענו afflicted

(הַכנָעָה Hachna'a, hach-NAH-ah: Submissive, obedient, co-operative)

(שְׁפַל רוּחַ Shfal Ruach, sh-fall ROO-ach: poor in spirit, literally "low-spirited")

[גַּאֲוָה Ga'ava, gah-ah-VAH: Pride, dignity, self-esteem; from גאה raised up/swollen]

25. JOY Simcha (SIM-chah) שִׂמְחָה

Joy, happiness, celebration

(עֲלִיזָה Aliza, all-ee-ZAH: Lightheartedness, playfulness, fun)

[אֵבֶל Evel, EH-vell: Sadness, grief, mourning]

26. JUSTICE Tzedek (TSEH-deck) צֶדֶק

Justice, fairness, objectivity; cognitive function = impersonal thinking

[מַשׂוֹא פָּנִים Maso Panim, muh-SO puh-NEEM: Partiality, bias, subjectivity; literally "face-lifting"]

27. KINDNESS Chesed (CHEH-sed) חֶסֶד

Kindness, sharing, helpfulness

Fourth Sefirah = expansion & unboundedness; love & mercy; right hand pulling closer (opposite Gevurah/Strength)

(טוּב-לֵב Tuv Lev, TOOV-levv: Good-heartedness, benevolence, charitableness)

[אָנוֹכִיוּת Anochiyut, ah-no-chee-OOT: Self-interest, selfishness; literally "Me-ism"]

28. KNOWLEDGE Da'at (DAH-aht) דַּעַת

Knowledge, sensibility, awareness; from ידע to experientially/cognitively know

First Sefirah = כֶּתֶר Keter, KEH-tare: Top of head, superconscious mind, literally "crown" (between Chochmah/Wisdom & Binah/Understanding)

(שֵׂכֶל Sechel, SEH-chel: Intelligence, observation, reflection)

[בַּעֲרוּת Ba'arut, bah-ah-ROOT: Ignorance, unconsciousness; from בער empty, cleared from existence]

29. LOVE Ahava (aha-VAH) אַהֲבָה

Love, affection, intimacy; from אהב to bring/give to another

(חִבָּה Chibah, chee-BAH: Attachment, closeness)

(יְדִידוּת Yedidut, yid-ee-DOOT: Friendship, endearment)

(רֵעוּת Re'ut, ray-OOT: Companionship, fellowship)

[שִׂנְאָה Sinah, see-NUH: Hatred, distance, non-preference]

(בְּדִידוּת Bedidut, bid-ee-DOOT: Withdrawal, solitude, isolation)

30. MERCY Chemlah (chem-LAH) חֶמְלָה

Mercy, mildness, leniency

(מְחִילָה Mechila, m-chee-LAH: Forgiveness; from מחל to blot out/cancel a debt)

(סְלִיחָה Slicha, slee-CHAH: To excuse/pardon; from סלח to release/sprinkle)

(חֲנִינָה Chanina, chah-NEE-nah: Clemency, amnesty; from חנן gracious)

[הַרשָׁעָה Harsha'ah, har-SHAH-ah: Negative judgement, condemnation]

[נקמָנִי Nakmani, knock-MAHN-ee: To be resentful, vindictive, vengeful]

31. MINDFULNESS Metinut (mitt-ee-NOOT) מְתִינוּת

Mindfulness, presence, intentionality (literally to "move slowly")

[חִפָּזוֹן Chipazon, chee-pah-ZONE: Hurry, rush, haste]

32. MODESTY Tzniut (ts-nee-OOT) צְנִיעוּת

Modesty, discreteness, privacy

(הַפנָמָה Hafnama, hoff-NOMM-ah: Inwardness, introversion)

[הַחצָנָה Hachtzana, hach-TSAN-ah: Outwardness, extroversion]

[פִּרסוּם Pirsum, peer-SOOM: uncovered, exposed, advertised; from פרס to spread out]

[פַּרהֶסיָה Parhesya, par-HESS-yuh: public, open, outspoken]

33. ORDERLINESS Seder (SAY-dare) סֵדֶר

Orderliness, efficiency, punctuality

[מִקרִי Mikri, meek-REE: Random, accidental, chaotic]

34. PERSEVERANCE Netzach (NETS-ach) נֵצַח

Perseverance, tenacity, grit; literally "to last"

Seventh Sefirah = Victory & success; right leg (opposite Hod)

[זְמַנִי Zmani, z-MAHN-ee: Temporary, passing, for a time]

35. PATIENCE Savlanut (sav-lah-NOOT) סַבְלָנוּת

Patience, endurance, holding space; literally to "bear a burden"

(אֹרֶךְ אַפַּיִם Orech Apaim, OR-ech ah-PIE-eem: Tolerance, forbearance, slowness to anger)

[נִרגָז Nirgaz, near-GAUZE: Easily provoked, upset, volatile]

[כַּעַס Ka'as, KAH-ahs: Irritation, annoyance, anger]

36. PEACE Shalom (shuh-LOME) שָׁלוֹם

Peace, quietness, wholeness

(קוֹר רוּחַ Kor Ruach, core ROO-ach: Calm, composure, literally a "cool spirit")

[בֶּהָלָה Behala, beh-ha-LAH: Fear, alarm, panic]

37. PLEASANTNESS Noam (no-AHM) נֹעַם

Pleasantness, sweetness, niceness

(חֵן Chen, CHANE: Graciousness, charm, charisma)

(סֵבֶר פָּנִים Sever Panim, SEH-vur puh-NEEM: Warmth, affability, geniality; literally "a bright face")

[מְרִירוּת Mrirut; mree-ROOT: Grumpiness, sourness, literally "bitterness"]

38. RESPONSIBILITY Acharayut (ach-rye-OOT) אַחֲרָיוּת

Responsibility, mutuality, legal guarantorship/joint liability; literally to "stand behind/substitute"

[עַצְמָאוּת Atzma'ut, ahts-mah-OOT: Independence, individuality, selfhood]

39. RIGHTNESS Tzedaka (ts-DAW-kuh) צְדָקָה

Moral/ethical/legal rightness, righteousness, the ideal

[מַמָּשִׁי Mamashi, mah-muh-SHE: realism, the actual]

40. SELF-CONTROL Perishut (pree-SHOOT) פְּרִישׁוּת

Self-control, discipline, abstinence

(כִּבּוּשׁ הַיֵּצֶר Kibbush Hayetzer, key-BOOSH ha-YETS-er: Subjugating the impulse)

[פָּרוּעַ Parua, puh-ROO-ah: Wild, unruly, turbulent; literally "loose/disheveled hair"]

41. SERENITY Menucha (min-oo-CHAH) מְנוּחָה

Serene, carefree, literally "at rest/comfortable"

(שִׁוִיּוֹן Shivyon, sheev-YONE: Equanimity, indifference, nonchalance)

[דְּאָגָה Daga, dah-GAH: Worry, care, concern]

[חֲרָדָה Charada, char-ah-DAH: Anxious, uneasy, nervous; literally "trembling"]

42. STABILITY Yesod (yee-SODE) יְסוֹד

Stable, rooted, grounded; literally "foundation"

Ninth Sefirah = Connection & communication; covenant relationship; regenerative organ

[נְתִיקָה Netika, nit-eek-AH: Disconnected, detached, rootless, neurotic]

43. STRENGTH Gevura (g-voo-RAH) גְּבוּרָה

Strength, ability, willpower

Fifth Sefirah = restriction & boundaries; severity & justice; left hand pushing away (opposite Chesed/Kindness)

(חוּמְרָה Chumra, CHOOM-rah: Strictness, stringency, rigour; from חמר to matter/have weight)

(חַיִל Chayil, CHAI-ul: Capability, valour, heroism)

[חוּלשָׁה Chulsha, chool-SHAH: Weakness, frailty, disability]

44. THANKFULNESS Hod (hode) הוֹד

Thankfulness, acknowledgement, distinction; related to הוֹדָיָה/הוֹדָאָה confession

Eighth Sefirah = splendour, literally "glow/brightness"; concession & submission; left leg (opposite Netzach/Victory)

(הַכָּרַת הטוֹב Hakarat Hatov, ha-kah-RAHT ha-TOVE: Gratitude, appreciation; literally "recognition of the good")

[שָׁווּת Shavut, shaw-VOOT: Equality, sameness, nondistinction]

45. TRUTH Emet (em-ET) אֱמֶת

Truth, authenticity, integrity

(דִּיוּק Diyuk, dee-OOK: Accuracy, precision, exactitude)

[שֶׁקֶר Sheker, SHEH-care: falsehood, misrepresentation, ambiguity]

46. UNDERSTANDING Bina (bee-NAH) בִּינָה

Understanding, differentiation, deep insight; from בוּן to split, pierce/penetrate; also בֵּין between

Third Sefirah = Left brain (opposite Chochmah/Wisdom)

(תְּבוּנָה Tevunah, t-voo-NAH: Comprehension, analytical thought, reason & intellect)

[פַּשְׁטוּת Pashtut posh-TOOT: Simplicity; dealing with the obvious/פְּשָׁט; surface/פְּשִׁיטָא-level apprehension]

47. WISDOM Chochma (CHOCH-mah) חָכְמָה

Wisdom, learning, scholarship

Second Sefirah = intuitive/revelatory ideas; creative flow state; right brain (opposite Understanding/Binah)

[הֶדְיוֹט Hedyut, head-YUTE: Blank, undifferentiated state]

48. ZEAL Zerizut (zree-ZOOT) זְרִיזוּת

Zeal, enthusiasm, promptness

[רִפְיוֹן Rifyon, reef-YONE: Relaxed, loose, slack]